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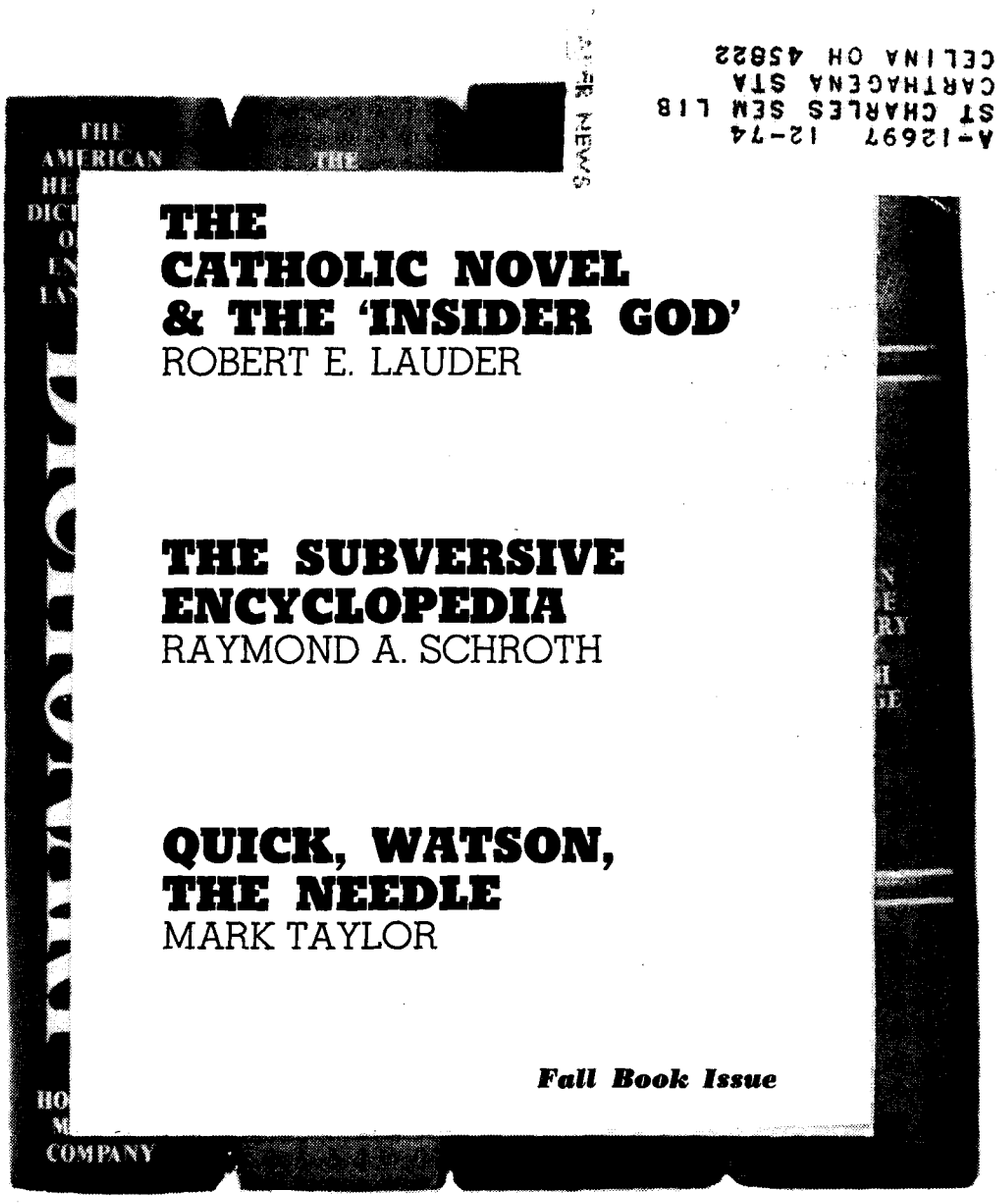

THE CATHOLIC NOVEL & THE 'INSIDER GOD'
ROBERT E. LAUDER

THE SUBVERSIVE ENCYCLOPEDIA
RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

QUICK, WATSON, THE NEEDLE
MARK TAYLOR

Fall Book Issue

MICHAEL TRUE LAST RESORT IN BOSTON **RICHARD L. SCHOENWALD** RECTIFYING THE COST OF FREEDOM • **WALLACE FOWLIE** ROBERT SPEAIGHT'S BERNANOS • **DANIEL STERN** THE ANAIS NIN DIARIES • **BRUCE COOK** STEPHEN SPENDER'S 'LOVE-HATE' **COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.** THE FILMS OF YASUJIRO OZU

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NEWS & VIEWS

Linguistic Sexism

In a move to counter what it terms "linguistic sexism," the editors of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* have established guidelines for writers in the publication. Henceforth, except for "specific reasons, such as direct quotation," *JES* writers will be expected to:

"1. Avoid the generic use of the word 'man,' both by itself and in compounds such as 'mankind.' The word man is ambiguous; frequently half of humankind does not know whether it is included in the statement or not. But, even more important, a growing number of women rightly resent being subsumed in a term that very often means exclusively the male of the species. Many substitutes can be found for the generic use of the word man: humanity, humankind, human beings, humans, persons, people, everyone.

"2. Avoid the use of masculine pronouns such as he or his to refer to men and women together. Substitutes might be 'he and she,' 'hers and his,' or—for the 'bolder' ones—the use of the as-yet-ungrammatical 'their,' as in 'let everyone perform their worship . . .,' or simply a shift to the plural form.

"3. Avoid referring to God with masculine pronouns. This may at times require some recasting of our wonted ways. For example, 'God is all powerful, He is all knowing,' might be rewritten 'God is all powerful, God is all knowing,' or 'God is all powerful and all knowing.' But to refer to God always in masculine terms (while theoretically we insist that God has no sex) is to imply that man is more godlike than woman. Such an inference being clearly unacceptable, the only alternatives are to avoid the third person pronouns in reference to God altogether, or to mix or alternate the use of the feminine and masculine pronouns referring to Her (Him). In general we recommend the former.

"4. Avoid using feminine pronouns to refer to entities such as the Church or Israel. Such usage normally reflects the assumption that the feminine is inferior to the masculine, as with the feminine Church, or Israel, vis-à-vis a masculine God. It is clear that Israel, the Church, etc., are subordinate to God. But, upon reflection, it should also be clear that the feminine-masculine imagery used in the Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and other traditions is an attempt to express that inferior-superior, human-divine relationship in language that reflected the then (and often, still) existing inferior-superior, female-male societal relationship. But once the position that 'all humans are created equal' is accepted, such language is no longer acceptable.

"5. Avoid other male-dominant phrases when more than just males are meant. For example: '*Sons* of God,' 'faith of our *fathers*,' 'pray *brethren*,' or 'to *emasculate* something' (the assumption being that only the male is vigorous)."

Editors of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* concede that at times "non-sexist language will strike our ears and eyes strangely, or will seem to lack something of the concreteness of a particular sexist term, as, for example, substituting 'humanity' for 'mankind.' "However, they predict "that after our ears and eyes get used to the non-sexist language, the former sexist language will seem strange."

Abortion and Taxes

Describing the measure as a "small economic disincentive for abortion," Congressman Earl F. Landgrebe (R.-Ind.) has introduced a bill that would permit the listing of an unborn child by its father as an income tax deduction over the nine-month period prior to birth.

Landgrebe would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, and allow a tax exemption calculated "280 days prior to live birth." The word "live" is intended to forestall "people who would be so base as to repeatedly become pregnant and repeatedly kill the unborn child in order to obtain additional tax exemptions."

Landgrebe distributed "Dear Colleague" letters in August inviting co-sponsors of his bill. He obtained one, Delegate Antonio Borja Won Pat (D-Guam).

On the other hand, his staff received "several" telephone calls inquiring whether the "Dear Colleague" letter was a hoax, what the purpose of the amendment was, and how the amendment would change existing law.

The inquiries did not sit well with Landgrebe. "It is a pathetic situation," he said, "when a Hoosier truck driver like me finds it necessary to lecture all the brilliant young lawyers working in Congress on the state of the law."

Hanging with Hang-Ups

An Israel Shenker dispatch from the Synod of Bishops to the *New York Times* demonstrates how persistent are old Roman reticences about news that is fit to print.

When Archbishop Samuel E. Carter of Kingston, Jamaica, suggested the possibility of a married clergy in the Western rites, the suggestion was omitted from the Vatican's press summary.

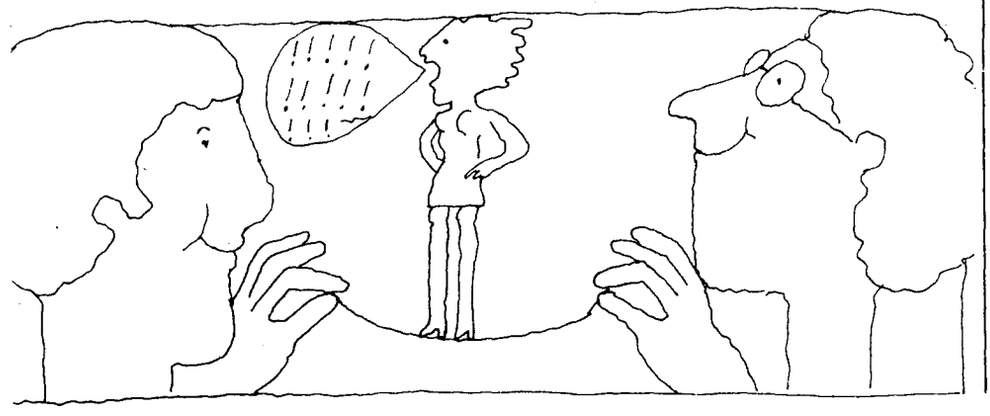
So too was the comment of Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia that films like *The Exorcist* and musicals like *Godspell* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* demonstrated youth's "groping for the elusive, the mysterious, the transcendent."

Odds and Ends

—The presalutation line on an Oct. 2 note from religion columnist and White House correspondent Rev. Lester Kinsolving read: "The Feast of the Annunciation of the Translation of Blessed John McLaughlin, S.J., from the Executive Mansion to Parts Unknown."

—Hear!, hear!, for Congressman John E. Moss' recommendation of Oct. 3, urging President Ford to halt intelligence briefings of Richard Nixon. Moss, Democrat of California, allegedly considers Nixon a security risk. But risk or not, Nixon's no longer President, has no official responsibilities, cannot make governmental decisions. He no more needs intelligence briefings than might Harold Stassen.

JOHN DEEDY



Bea Weidner
Women's Survival Manual/LNS

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CORRESPONDENCE

Vatican Hang-ups

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: I was much interested in Frank Getlein's article on "The Vaticanizing of American Art" in the September 6 issue. He outlines this sorry controversy in effective fashion. I must admit that his references to me tickled my ego but I am really but one of many ignored by the Roman curia bureaucrats in their search for "modern" American art to stock the Vatican Gallery. There are elements of high comedy in the two innocent ignorant envoys barging in Madison Avenue galleries to beg for some *name* work of art. I would have enjoyed watching the ripples of surprise, perhaps anger, surely disgust, of some of the owners of these galleries.

The prestige of the Vatican in these matters had better be protected by others more knowledgeable in contemporary art and who can search for prime examples of first-rate art among the many fine artists to be found in all parts of the United States. It would be a slow process, but is the Vatican ever in a hurry? MAURICE LAVANOUX

President, The Society for the Renewal of Christian Art, Inc.

New Orleans, La.

To the Editors: Once again Frank Getlein has put us in debt. His article "The Vaticanizing of American Art" [Sept. 6], states clearly and fairly what I had planned to write, somewhat more acerbically, about the Vatican Gallery of Contemporary Art. Embarrassment and shame were my main feelings on visiting the deplorable new Gallery.

The politicizing of the American section is, I submit, only one major cause of the monumental gaffe. Much of the vastly inflated Italian section can most charitably be dubbed simply gross. The only comforting thought that crossed my mind was that most Vatican visitors seem to skip the Gallery altogether.

Thanks to Mr. Getlein, too, for his

(Continued on page 95)

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FOOD, FORD AND BUTZ

The *New York Times'* juxtapositioning of a report on malnutrition in vast parts of the world with its story on the latest Soviet grain-deal fiasco pointed up the obscenity whereby 91 million bushels of wheat and 34 million bushels of corn would have moved from the harvest fields of the U.S. to the silos of Russia. The grain deal, at today's prices, was still only half the $1 billion sale made to Russia in 1972. But that hardly mitigated circumstances—the less so since the corn, by Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz' own admission, was intended to feed livestock rather than humans, the Soviet being anxious to maintain the size and quality of beef herds for domestic meat consumption. This, while in parts of Bangladesh people were being reduced to one meal every other day, and while starvation gnawed at the sub-Saharan countries of Africa and threatened Indonesia and parts of Latin America.

The grain shipment to Russia was halted, of course, at the instance of President Ford, and the $500 million sale was eventually canceled. The action was decisive and praiseworthy, but the rationale subsequently put forth in explaining it removed much of the gloss. Narrow political considerations were revealed, as well as a selfish concern about the impact that the grain sale would have on food prices in the United States. American food prices are a matter for serious concern, but if one can read between the lines of official rhetoric, this concern is strongest for those less affected by spiraling food costs: the middle-class, middle-income shopper. One discerns no overriding concern for the poor and the aged, whose meager resources have been devastated by food costs, nor for the millions of the *New York Times* report whose conditions with respect to food supplies can only be described as appalling.

President Ford's economic message of Oct. 9 before a joint session of Congress contained some constructive proposals, including the removal of acreage limitations on certain crops and a request for a provision under Public Law 480 whereby the President could authorize food shipments to foreign countries "on national interest or humanitarian grounds." But this is the band-aid approach. What is needed more than ever is a comprehensive, coordinated food program that takes into consideration the needy of Amer-

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ica and, since the U.S. is the breadbasket for much of the wider world, the needy abroad—as distinct from the affluent who are anxious only to eat better. Several detailed suggestions are already on the table from citizen groups and individuals, such as Senators Kennedy and Humphrey. Senator Kennedy, for instance, has urged a food-for-peace program, the protection of energy resources for food, a quickening of food-relief efforts, and U.S. leadership in the establishment of a world food bank.

The response of the Nixon Administration to proposals like these was invariably more political and monetary than it was humanitarian. Since the same advisors who helped devise Nixon policy are around now, the worry is that the country will get more of the same in the Ford Administration, whatever the fine intentions expressed Oct. 9. In this context, it is especially disturbing that President Ford should be determined to retain Dr. Butz in the key position of Secretary of Agriculture. Of the numerous hangers-on from the Nixon Administration, it is difficult to think of one who is personally more objectionable and professionally less suited for his assignment. He is a notorious opponent of curbs on farm exports—although the new policy is allegedly one of export control; he insists, to the dismay of humanitarians generally, that any U.S. reserves held as part of a world grain reserve be kept in private hands; and he seems singularly insensitive towards the underprivileged. Anyone who can enthuse over a food stamp program as a return to the free-enterprise system is not exactly the person to be heading a Department of Agriculture when people are going hungry.

After early October's grain fiasco, President Ford was asked whether he intended to dismiss Dr. Butz for gross mismanagement. He evaded the question, saying "I'm not going to pass judgment at this time." A few days later, he declared through a spokesman that Dr. Butz would be staying on, that on balance the Agriculture Department under Dr. Butz "has done a good job." It was a depressing example of President Ford's ineptness when it comes to dealing with the old Nixon "team." But this time more is at stake than the good humor of the public over a pardon; or of NATO nations over a new commander; or of Spain over a newly proposed ambassador. Here lives are at stake, and budgets. For the sake of hungry people everywhere, for the sake of the poor and the financially pressed, Earl Butz must go. His departure seems a necessary precondition to any kind of enlightened and effective food program. Let President Ford act immediately.

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THE BUSING CONTROVERSY

LAST RESORT IN BOSTON

The City-Wide Educational Coalition, founded in 1971 as a volunteer citizens group for quality education in Boston public schools, is housed in a building dedicated to the memory of Theodore Parker, the great 19th-century abolitionist. Presently, the Coalition, struggling with city-wide busing problems, faces issues as difficult as those Parker confronted a century ago.

With funding from the local government, the Coalition continues to work for better schools, but since last June it has had to devote its energies almost exclusively to the problems of court-ordered integration, serving as a contact point and memory bank, with some staff members working as monitors in area high schools. Since September 12, 18,200 of Boston's 92,000 school children have been on the move, with white children bused to predominantly black Roxbury and black children bused to predominantly white South Boston. A large wall map in bold red and green lines; and three large scrapbooks of clippings tell the long and painful story of irresponsibility that has made the present crisis, in some ways, inevitable.

At noon on Monday, September 30, Carolyn Ward, a director of the Coalition, walked across the Boston Common to join other black parents from Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, and other sections of the city in front of the Massachusetts State Capitol. Their purpose was to express support for their children, now caught in the middle of the turmoil over busing, in the nation's oldest school system. Among those attending the peaceful demonstration were Gloria Joyner, director of the Task Force on Education, mainly a black and Spanish-speaking group, and Jack Robinson of the Archdiocesan Commission on Human Rights; like almost everyone involved, they spoke somewhat cautiously about the positive effects of busing: "Why bus kids from one school to another, when the schools are equally bad?" But they also pointed out that busing seems the only way to focus light on the badly neglected school system. Busing, in other words, is a kind of last resort, not a solution itself, but a means by which the city may eventually be brought to recognize a serious problem in public education and work collectively and politically to solve it.

The neglect of Boston public schools is a familiar enough story to readers of Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools*. From all indications, the situation, for poor white as well as poor

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black children, remains pretty much as it was described in Kozol's bestseller, in 1967. At that time, a reviewer in the *Christian Science Monitor* said that Kozol, in writing about the Boston system, "could be writing of the system in almost any city in the country"—a statement that is only partly true. With a long history of public neglect, Boston schools have deteriorated faster than those in other big cities. Several popular politicians, including former School Committee member and Congresswoman Louise Day Hicks (who vigorously resisted integration) have contributed to the present confusion. Although blacks make up only 33 percent of the city's total population, they number over 80 percent of the population in some schools—a sure sign that federally-ordered desegregation has not taken place.

Mrs. Leonora Grant, a long-time resident of Hyde Park, mother of ten children, and one of the original volunteers of the City-Wide Education Coalition, describes another central problem. She is not willing, she says, to sacrifice her children to the present Boston schools as long as the parochial schools provide a better alternative. "But," she adds, "the closing of the parochial schools would probably be the best thing that ever happened to the Boston public schools. Then parents, who can now afford (some by working two jobs) to send their children to private and parochial schools, might take a great interest in the city system."

Closing the parochial and private schools in Boston, where they have always received favored treatment, is neither a sure nor a likely solution. But changing the political structure of the governing boards of the public schools probably is. That, at the moment, promises the best hope for change, and pro-busing forces are confident that in the long run the court-ordered integration of the schools will help people find a means of realizing that. For one thing, the Boston School Committee, in the long process that led up to the busing this September, has lost the respect of everybody. The traditional five-person board, elected at-large, has been a major impediment to fundamental change over the years. Two members of the present committee, which remains in office through January 1, 1975, openly fought integration of the schools. Although the anti-busing forces appear strong at the moment, both men were soundly defeated in bids for public office this September, one for District Attorney and the other for sheriff of Suffolk County.

In November, Boston voters have an opportunity to choose between four alternative models for governance of the public schools. Briefly, the plans are (I) expansion of the school committee from five to eight members, all elected at-large; (II) expansion of the school committee to eleven members, one elected from each of eleven zones; (III) replacement of the school committee by decentralized administrations for each of the intermediate school districts and high schools; and (IV) expansion of the school committee to eleven members, five at-large and six from districts.

Many people committed to fundamental change in the Boston public schools count on the voters to adopt Plan III, favoring increased neighborhood involvement and community control. Since it has the backing of Mayor Kevin White, there is some chance it will pass. Kevin White narrowly missed the Democratic Vice Presidential nomination in 1972, and he would undoubtedly like to have Boston look better in 1976 than it does in 1974.

Busing came to Boston as a result of a ruling handed down by Judge W. Arthur Garrity, Jr., in Federal Court last June. The 152-page document said, among other things, that the defendants, the Boston School Committee, "knowingly carried out a systematic program of segregation affecting all the city's students, teachers and school facilities," and that the Committee "intentionally brought about and maintained a dual school system." Boston schools were, in other words, "unconstitutionally segregated." In spite of continuing disputes and boycotts—with rabble-rousing by members of the Nazi party and the Ku Klux Klan and with school absenteeism above normal in several schools, much of the system had been successfully integrated by the fourth week.

The ferocity of the busing opponents, particularly in the Irish Catholic stronghold of South Boston, came as a shock to "liberal" Massachusetts and to the rest of the country as well. Roy Wilkins, president of the NAACP, after a visit with Mayor White, said "Boston should be ashamed of itself." And Mrs. Frankie Freeman, a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, said the hostility she saw in Boston was worse than what she saw in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1965.

Boston's school were first desegregated in 1855, when Theodore Parker's fellow abolitionists forced the state legislature to pass a kind of racial imbalance law and got Boston schools to follow the exemple of Salem and Newburyport. This fall, over a century later, the federal government is the one forcing a change. It looks like a long and difficult struggle.

But there are numerous groups, like the City-Wide Educational Coalition, who are committed to seeing it through. The religious community has provided some support: Cardinal Medeiros testified in favor of correcting the racial imbalance, last spring; Father Paul Rynne has worked actively on behalf of the Archdiocesan Commission on Human Rights; and the Rev. Bradford H. Bryant, a Methodist minister, helped initiate and provide office space for the Coalition, in the Theodore Parker Memorial Building. There is hope among this community of people that busing, the last resort, may eventually lead to better schools for Boston's children—black and white.

MICHAEL TRUE

(Michael True, a frequent contributor, is a professor at Assumption College in Massachusetts.)

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THE CATHOLIC NOVEL AND THE 'INSIDER GOD'

ROBERT E. LAUDER

The contrasting visions of Graham Greene and Walker Percy

The Catholic novel is infinitely interesting. For a large part of this century it has been an "efficacious sign" in the Catholic community: by mirroring the experience of the Catholic community it has fed and nourished that community's life. The novels of such giants as Bloy, Mauriac, Bernanos, Greene and Waugh by exploring God's love affair with man have illumined the Catholic community's self-understanding. In this post-Vatican II period which seems increasingly marked by confusion and apathy, the contribution of the Catholic novel is particularly important.

In his excellent study, *The Vital Tradition: The Catholic Novel in a Period of Convergence,* (Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1970), Gene Kellogg argues that for the last seventy years the Catholic novel has been converging with secular environment. Kellogg uses the term "Catholic novel" in a restricted sense:

> Only a novel whose mainspring of dramatic action depends upon Roman Catholic theology, or upon the history of thought in one of the world's large Catholic communities, or upon "development" in Newman's sense is regarded as contributing to the flowering of major literary achievement that began to break down with the end of the nineteenth century and that tapered off—perhaps ended—when Roman Catholics, in the phrase now so widely used, "joined the modern world" after the Second Vatican Council.

When he wrote the book four years ago, Kellogg felt that the process of Catholic self-understanding in relation to secular culture had moved from convergence to confluence. In other words, that which Peter Berger warned about in *A Rumor of Angels* has become a reality: in their efforts to become relevant to secular culture Catholics have lost their self-identity. This loss of self-identity is the reason Kellogg offers why the Catholic novel has suffered. Kellogg writes:

> For many Catholics, confluence by the mid-1960s became so complete that they were no longer sure what the true Catholic essence was. The primary and defiant Catholic emphasis upon the spirit, which for so many generations had caused the creative spark between the Catholic communities and the secular environment, virtually ceased.

Kellogg is onto something terribly important when he says that the most productive time for the Catholic novel is when the Catholic community both maintains its sense of identity and is simultaneously in close, abrasive contact with the secular environment. I believe that the Catholic community is moving back from confluence to convergence and that already there are hopeful signs of the birth of a new kind of Catholic novel. While being part of the vital tradition, it mirrors the shift in theological emphasis that has taken place since Vatican II.

Working out of the French philosopher of action, Maurice Blondel, Gregory Baum in his book, *Man Becoming: God in Secular Language* (Herder and Herder, 1970), expresses clearly the kind of shift in theological understanding which I think will characterize the Catholic novel. Blondel stressed that the only truth about God that modern man would accept was a truth that corresponded to man's experience of reality, a truth that had an intrinsic relation to life. Characterizing nineteenth-century apologetics as extrinsicism, as stressing the source of Revelation rather than its relevance, and affectionately

FATHER ROBERT E. LAUDER *teaches at Cathedral College of the Immaculate Conception in Douglaston, N.Y.*

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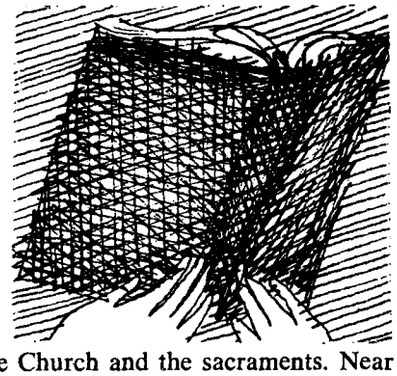
referring to Blondel's insights into God's presence in human history as "The Blondelian Shift," Baum stresses that the divine mystery of redemption is operative everywhere in human life. Because God enters into the definition of man, because He is immanent to man's self-making, God should never be depicted as an object or even a subject totally extrinsic to man. Baum declares that the foremost means of grace is life itself. This shift in Catholic understanding is already and will continue to be mirrored in Catholic novels.

Detailed studies of this shift and its incarnation in the Catholic novel should be very beneficial. Here I will merely illustrate the shift by noting the shift in emphasis in two Catholic novelists. The two I have chosen are Graham Greene and Walker Percy. To represent the previous emphasis in the Catholic novel, Greene is a good choice not only because of his exceptional talent but also because the older theological vision reached its most powreful and most extreme depiction in his dramatic description of God's pursuit of man. I choose Percy to represent the new emphasis because he is, in both his talent and his vision, one of the most promising of the present crop of Catholic novelists. In addition to Percy, other contemporary novelists could be studied to show shifting attitudes and emphases within the Catholic community. In his provocative article, "Catholic Faith and Fiction," (*New York Times Book Review*, January 16, 1972), Garry Wills argued that a new kind of Catholic novel was evident in the works of Wilfrid Sheed, Thomas Kenealy, Elizabeth Cullinan, Piers Paul Read and others. All of these writers may prove valuable in helping present-day Catholics attain a new self-image. Percy is particularly interesting because of his knowledge of and affection for existentialist philosophy. Existentialist thinkers whose insights helped form the theology that emerged from Vatican II were also the thinkers who greatly affected Percy in the years he was recuperating from tuberculosis. The sickness had interrupted his medical career in 1942. Percy's reading of people like Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Marcel and Sartre must have influenced his decision to convert to Catholicism a few years later.

Prefatory to any discussion of either Greene or Percy it should be said that nothing in either vision contradicts or negates anything in the other vision. We are discussing an emphasis, but an emphasis that is extremely important for illuminating our experience. To the extent that the Blondelian shift described by Baum continues to be influential in the Catholic community's self-understanding, the kind of novel Percy has written will be particularly valuable as a dramatization of the Catholic vision of life.

To use a metaphor that may be overworked, Greene's vision of Catholicism is vertical while Percy's is horizontal. Greene focuses on God's *special* action through *special* rites in special places with a *select* group of people. The paradigm of all Greene's Catholic novels is that God is the outsider, though the loving outsider, pursuing sinners who eventually become saints. It is precisely the "outsider-God" image that allows for Greene's frequent use of theological paradox. In what many consider to be Greene's three finest Catholic novels, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*, and *The End of the Affair*, God is present in what seems to be strangest places: the souls of a whiskey priest, an adulterous man and a promiscuous woman. The drama and ultimately the greatness of Greene's novels comes from his depiction of the "Hound of Heaven," entering the temporal at the strangest times and in the most unusual places. Though I don't think Greene allows it to happen, his "outsider-God" comes dangerously close to being a *deus ex machina*. This was Evelyn Waugh's criticism of *The End of the Affair*. Waugh felt that Greene's suggestion that the childhood baptism of Sarah began to "work" in her later life was dangerously close to a magical view of the sacraments.

Typical of Greene's vision is that the sinner is really the saint. In the three novels mentioned the main characters, however labyrinthine the roads by which they discover God, become saints through God's special pres-



ence in the Church and the sacraments. Near the end of *The Power and the Glory*, in a discussion with the Communist leader, the "whiskey priest" articulates the type of sacramental emphasis that was typical of Greene's novels and of Catholic novels prior to Vatican II.

> . . . That's another difference between us. It's no good your working for your end unless you're a good man yourself. And there won't always be good men in your party.Then you'll have all the old starvation, beating, get-rich-anyhow. But it doesn't matter so much my being a coward—and all the rest. I can put God into a man's mouth just the same—and I can give him God's pardon. It wouldn't make any difference to that if every priest in the Church was like me.

No Catholic novelist has surpassed Greene in literary skill. Percy is not yet Greene and I suspect that the Southern doctor-turned-novelist would be the first to admit it. More important for our purposes is that Percy's world is not "Greeneland."

While in Greene's novels the drama is centered around

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theological paradox and the special actions of God, in Percy's novels the drama focuses on everyday life; but that life is illumined by a Catholic vision. In Greene's novels we have the entrances of God into time, in Percy's novels we have the rediscovery of God's perduring presence. The controlling insight in Percy's vision is not one of theological paradox but of God's presence in all of human life and the Catholic's awareness of that presence.

In an extremely fine analysis of Percy's three novels ("Percy's Reliques," *Cross Currents*, Vol. XXII, Number One, Winter, 1972), Professor Joseph Hynes identified some of the elements crucial to Percy's vision in each of the three novels: in each the hero is a Southerner, a non-practicing Catholic and in each book the vocation of the doctor looms large. All three novels, *The Moviegoer* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1961), *The Last Gentleman* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1966) and *Love in the Ruins* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1971) explore the search for a lost vision of mankind. In his excellent, detailed study of Percy, *The Sovereign Wayfarer: Walker Percy's Diagnosis of the Malaise* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1972, $10.00, p. 63), Martin Luschei sketches the landscape of Percy's fiction.

> The wayfarer who is contemporary man finds himself wandering in the malaise, assailed by its deadly forms of inauthenticity and abstraction, its numbing everydayness. As a dweller in the malaise . . . I can never hope to escape its suffocation except by my own decisive act. The first step is to recognize that condition for what it is. Then I must assert my claim to existence by the leap into the intersubjective communion, by which I acknowledge the claims of others upon me and within which I seek the answer to the question *who am I?* If I prove to be a knight of faith I may arrive at the incomprehensible faith of Abraham. In any event the choice is mine: I can languish in the malaise as a "curtailed I" or I can live transformed by the infinite passion.

The South is a good locus for Percy because it serves as a metaphor for man's search for and rediscovery of himself. In *The Moviegoer*, it is significant that the main character, Binx Bolling, loves to go to the movies. Percy's amusing depiction of Bolling's movie-inspired fantasy world reveals that Binx is grouping for a vision. He wants a world where man can still be a hero or a saint. He seems to find it at the conclusion of the novel by passing up a lucrative career as a stockholder, deciding to study medicine and marry Kate, who is his cousin (return to home and to vision). How unlike the depiction of salvation is Percy's from Greene's! The following brief dialogue between Binx and Kate, who has suicidal urges, depicts Binx' "leap of faith" and rediscovery of self and a saving vision:

> (Kate) "But I think I see a way. It seems to me that if we are together a great deal and you tell me the simplest things and not laugh at me—I beg you for pity's own sake never laugh at me—tell me things like: Kate, it is all right for you to go down to the drugstore, and give me a kiss, then I will believe you. Will you do that? . . .
>
> (Binx) Yes, I'll do that.

Binx has gained the vision which escapes the darkness of despair indicated in the quote from Kierkegaard which Percy uses to preface the novel: ". . . the specific character of despair is precisely this: it is unaware of being despair." *(The Sickness Unto Death)* Percy's characters gain a vision, an insight into life's meaning that enables them to survive and even to hope for happiness in the temporal order.

The quote from Guardini's *The End of the Modern World*, which prefaces *The Last Gentleman*, captures the vision that animates both *The Last Gentleman* and the other two novels. Guardini indicates that as the modern world ends the secularist will cease to benefit from the values of the Revelation he denies, that loneliness in faith will be terrible, that love will disappear from the public world but that the love from one lonely person to another will be all the more precious. When Will Barrett joins the Vaught family at the end of *The Last Gentleman*, he is rejoining a stained suffering humanity with the hope that his love will make a difference. Typical of Percy's vision, the possibility of a successful interpersonal relationship spells Will Barrett's salvation. A wayfarer on a journey through life, through love for others Will may regain a lost vision.

In Percy's best book, *Love in the Ruins: The Adventures of a Bad Catholic at a Time Near the End of the World*, just about every contemporary movement both within and outside of the Catholic Church is satirized. The book is a kind of a Catholic 1984. Very funny, but also multi-leveled, the book abounds with religious symbols. Psychiatrist Dr. Thomas More has invented a machine to detect the individual effect of Original Sin and he feels it will be of tremendous service to mankind. In spite of the wild satire, this novel is still an affirmation of the everydayness of religious faith and God's presence in the everyday. The book ends with More, having returned to the sacraments on Christmas Eve, musing about the goodness of everyday life, of God's creation and of the love between him and his wife. The last sentence of the novel might serve as Percy's hymn to the everyday. On Christmas Day, More takes his wife to bed:

> To bed we go for a long winter's nap, twined about each other as the ivy twineth, not under a bush or in a car or on the floor of any such humbug as marked the past peculiar years of Christendom, but at home in bed where all good folk belong.

To further illustrate the contrast between Greene and

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Percy, a study could be made of Greene's priests and Percy's doctors. The unattractiveness of Greene's priests calls attention to his vision. In "Greeneland," the more repulsive the priest, the more powerful is the presence of God. The vocation of doctor is more humble, more ordinary, but it fits Percy's vision of man's living commitment to serve mankind. Like Albert Camus' doctor in *The Plague*, Percy's heroes have settled for serving man but their creator is very aware that man is more than man, that at the roots of the human is a divine mystery.

Greene's and Percy's visions are radically different but they fit into the same tradition. The popularity of Greene's latest novel *The Honorary Consul* suggests that there will always be room in the Catholic tradition for Greene's vision. However, to the extent that Vatican II theology forms the Catholic community, Percy's type of novel will become more and more significant.

The Catholic novel is infinitely interesting. Ultimately, this is because, at its profoundest levels, the Catholic experience is infinitely interestng. Whatever else we may say of him, God is not boring.

THE SUBVERSIVE ENCYCLOPEDIA

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

A look into the new 'Britannica'

All of human learning, say Mortimer J. Adler and his senior colleague Robert M. Hutchins, is one. And, since learning is a circle, an inquiring mind can enter anywhere and follow a chain of ideas through to a total educational experience. Furthermore, there *are some* unchanging truths and there is a basic intellectual lore—the so-called humanizing "liberal" arts—to which everyone between 16 and 20 *should* be introduced. To draw back from this traditional lore in favor of pragmatic vocationalism, specialization, or a cafeteria collection of unrelated "credits"—which much of American higher education now threatens to do (egged on by Gerald Ford's observation that there is little correspondence between educational goals and the job market)—would be to succumb to the anti-intellectualism that has long been America's crippling curse.

Hutchins and Adler have been saying these things all their lives; but, in spite of their influence on the University of Chicago and on the two Saint John's Colleges built around their idea of the Great Books, the American educational establishment has not made the Hutchins-Adler vision its own; and today's college student gets the rhetorical gravy but not the meat of a real Liberal education. From time to time these two intellectual entrepreneurs have taken their case to a more appreciative public and come up with academic and commercial devices (some would say gimmicks)—like the 1952 54-volume *Great Books of the Western World* with Adler's *Syntopicon* of the "Great Ideas" and Hutchins' *Great Conversations*, or Adler's *How to Read a Book*: *The Art of Getting a Liberal Education* (1940, revised and updated 1972, with Charles Van Doren) or Hutchins' Santa Barbara Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions—to put flesh on their words, to bind and box on the shelf what Truth and Value would look like if we could hold them in our hands.

Now, with the publication of the new, completely re-conceived and rewritten fifteenth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* they have reached their seventh day, and they can rest. For in many ways the most interesting thing about the new *Britannica* is not just the excellence of its scholarship but the way in which the promoters and editors have re-created what an encyclopedia is. They have transformed it from a research tool, or a status symbol foisted on parents by a foot-in-the-door salesman as if it were a brain transplant for an underachieving child, to an active invitation to a liberal education. Thus, in the right (or wrong) hands it is a potentially radical teaching device, perhaps one of the few encyclopedias we could classify as subversive literature.

Description. The editors have divided the 30-volume set into three sections. The 10-volume *Micropaedia* is the key, a glorified dictionary and index with 102,214 short entries (under 700 words) with cross references to, and capsule versions of, the major articles in the 19-volume *Macropaedia*. The *Macro* presents "knowledge in depth," 4,207 major articles—some of them book-length, like the over 180,000-word section on Education—on the whole range of human knowledge. Finally, the one-volume *Propaedia* outlines this knowledge in ten parts (Matter and Energy, the Earth, Life on Earth, Human Life, Human Society, Art, Technology, Religion, the History of Mankind and the

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., *who teaches journalism at Fordham and is an associate editor of* Commonweal, *is author of* The Eagle and Brooklyn *(Greenwood Press).*

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Branches of Knowledge), introduces us to each branch with essays by celebrated scholars like Rene DuBos, Loren Eiseley, Jacques Barzun and Adler himself, then directs us to the sections of the *Macropaedia* where we can follow through. Adler stresses that the *Propaedia* is the heart of the system, that this theoretical outline of the whole of knowledge was completed before the articles were commissioned, as if he had mapped out the heavens and set loose a host of demiurges to fill in the stars. And it is here that the 30 volumes become not just a reference set but an institution, a "university without walls," where the student's initial question about mysticism or the sacraments will lead him to an outline of the whole history and doctrine of Christianity—from Abelard to Zwingli—then to the rest of world religions.

Working through the books themselves, what can the critical reader say? First, that they are beautiful. The type is 9-point Times Roman (like our book reviews) and the two-column pages are broken up by lots of bold-face sub-heads and marginal notes. In the *Micropaedia*, designed and written for the junior high school student, there are illustrations, many of them in color, on every page. Each entry on a country, for example, is accompanied by a handsome box of national statistics—perhaps even more than an ambassador would need to know—and a small color-map and flag. And the small cuts decorating the entries on artists—particularly selections like Arnold Newman's photos of contemporary painters like Kenneth Noland and others with their works—and those of flowers, animals and ancient landmarks are quite striking. (But why is the entry on the Palamino, "type of horse distinguished by its color—some shade of yellow or gold with a white or silver mane and tail," illustrated in black and white?)

Second, the books are fun. It's fun to just play around with them, relishing the style of some of the more felicitous essays, like Howard Nemerov's on poetry, or anticipating the historical judgments in the biographical studies ("history is unlikely to place him [Pius XII] among the great creative popes"), or simply quarreling with the editors on whom or what they have decided to immortalize. And here we encounter one of the more aggravating characteristics of the *Micro*: perhaps in its efforts to prove itself up-to-date, it tends to confuse itself with the *Celebrity Register*, and it has ended up canonizing the questionable values and tastes of contemporary culture.

To gain your block of *Britannica* turf it helps to be an athlete, actress, or astronaut. Besides 55 pages of sports records, there are 'bios' of Roberto Clemente, Hank Aaron and Bob Cousy. Dizzy Dean and James Dean. Pictures and 'bios' of—it would seem—every ballet dancer ever. Ivanovich Belyayev who piloted Russia's eighth manned space flight; Stuart Roosa who went up in Apollo 14. Lots of space for Joan Crawford and Bette Davis. Janis Joplin. James Brown the soul singer and Jim Brown the football player movie star. At this rate, how about space for the "stars" of a few years ago? Roy Rogers and Nelson Eddy? No. Not even Tom Mix. The Abominable Snowman, yes. But not the Loch Ness Monster, who is no less real. And theologians? Forget it. John Courtney Murray gets four lines. Hans Küng, none. Bernard Lonergan? Never. The *Commonweal* listing is of the short-lived 19th century English socialist magazine. *America* gets nothing. But *Playboy*? Of course.

Nevertheless, the substance of the new *Britannica* and the material on which it will ultimately be judged is in that part which most resembles the traditional encyclopedia, the *Macropaedia*. A few critics have already complained that the entries on gout and dragons lack the flavor of the earlier editions and that the picture of Tolstoy is really one of Turgenev; and I am tempted to complain that the illustration of Poe is from a little-known 1845 oil portrait rather than the familiar mustachioed glowering visage in the photo we have come

to love and fear. Yet, the *Macro* is a precious library in which the world's outstanding scholars, freelancers and journalists have summed up not only the present state of knowledge in a given field, but their own life's work as well.

Some of the articles are actually single and multi-authored books which the *EB* would do well to issue separately for classroom use. With over 1,600 words a page, there are 178 pages under Western Literature, plus 22 pages in Anthony Burgess' brilliant and personal piece on The Novel, in which he ranges over into his theories of criticism, observing that the best critic of fiction is the novelist *manqué*, whereas the successful novelist, "shorn of self-doubt," brings to other men's work a kind of "magisterial blindness." *Commonweal* readers might turn to articles by *Commonweal* contributors: John Cogley on Pope John XXIII, Avery Dulles on Revelation, Martin Marty and John MacKenzie on Roman Catholicism, Wallace Fowlie on Jean Cocteau and Stendhal, Denis Donoghue on Yeats, etc. . . . and then spend some time with some rather provocative articles like that on Pacifism and Nonviolent Movements by Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann, in which he calls on pacifism to renounce its perfectionist illustrations, acknowledge human limitations, and settle for intelli-

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gent planning that would offset overpopulation and pollution, and just be happy to keep armed conflicts localized; and Gunther Bornkamm's article on Jesus Christ which begins: "The history of the life, work, and death of Jesus of Nazareth reveals nothing of the worldwide movement to which he gave rise."

I particularly enjoyed *New York Times'* reporter Murray Schumach's story on New York. He has the grit of his beloved city under his fingernails; and, although the hackneyed illustrations of Central Park, Park Avenue and Lincoln Center belie the tension of his treatment, the city that emerges from his 15-page portrait is the authentic one—the magnificent swarming conglomeration of violent ghettos and charming neighborhoods, as awesome as its skyline and as intimate as its quietest cafe, the "dying" metropolis that is "far more alive on its deathbed" than the dreary suburbs to which so many of its more timid citizens have fled.

But Hutchins and Adler will not rest well if their new *EB* is merely read, admired and bought. They are, above all, educators; and this new project should be seen as another attempt to influence the curriculum of American secondary and higher education. Used creatively, it could be subversive in that it would subvert some of the university's more inhibiting structures: the mandatory introductory course which often repeats high school material; inflexible sequences of courses and requirements; the time-block system that imagines that knowledge is best imparted in a classroom in three 50-minute periods a week; the hack lecturer, the instructor who really doesn't want to be there but is impelled to drone "basic" biology, geography, or history into the unwilling heads of passive listeners who thirst only for the end of the final exam. I tested the *EB* on a bright student asking him to compare the articles on psychology, anthropology and the Middle Ages with the courses he had had last year. He answered that his own Middle Ages course could have been called "The Middle Ages Day-by-Day," but that the *EB* articles corresponded with what he had learned. It would seem that this student and others like him would be better off spending less time in class, reading the *EB* guided by the *Propaedia*, and taking an exam. (Another student told me he had spent *two weeks* listening to a professor outline the history of a European country, then, during review, had found the same material in *Colliers' Encyclopedia.*) This reallocation of time might put the academic hack out of business and free the great lecturers (of which each university has about three), the good researchers, and discussion-seminar leaders, and the more motivated students to deal with the results of their own research, to discuss original texts or more recent or controversial books, and ask questions about the value of what they have learned.

But meanwhile, in a period of general educational caution and retrenchment, when so many of the educational experimentations of the 1960s (when one man's innovation was always in danger of becoming another man's strait jacket) appear to have flopped, when the job market glut has cowed both timid faculty and students into benign passivity, the newborn *EB* is in danger of just sitting there in its cradle—certainly not stillborn, but perhaps just once-born. And Hutchins and Adler, great teachers that they are, will go on feeling what all teachers necessarily feel—incompleteness, the gnawing of so much work still undone.

TWICE-TOLD TALES

THE SCREEN

I suppose it's easy to see why, among all the great Japanese directors of the post-war era, Yasujiro Ozu has been the last to receive recognition outside Japan. Compare his work to that of Akira Kurosawa, who was the first to receive such recognition. Back in the fifties Kurosawa, the classic maker of Samurai sword-fight films, readily found an international audience for his work. To Americans who had had the Western as a staple of their movie diet, Samurai films seemed entirely familiar. Kurosawa's monumental epic, *The Seven Samurai*, was remade here as one of the most successful Westerns of all time, *The Magnificent Seven*; and in Manhattan just off Forty-Second Street, where all the mass-audience action films play, there used to be a theater that showed Japanese Samurai films exclusively. (That was before pornography and Kung Fu took over.)

Ozu's films, on the other hand, have only begun to appear in this country in the last couple of years, even though he died over a decade ago. In one way it might seem that Ozu's postwar films—he had already been directing for fifteen years before the war—should be even easier to take in than Kurosawa's. At least Ozu's don't have obscure medieval settings. They are about modern Japan where people wear business suits and work in offices. Occasionally they even go out to bars, drink too much Scotch, and make asses of themselves. And yet, despite this concern with the Westernization of Japan, I'm sure that at home Ozu is considered the most Japanese and insular of all the postwar directors. I would imagine one reason his films haven't reached us earlier is that in Japan itself he was always thought too Japanese to be exportable.

No doubt Ozu was, too, in the way he practiced his craft, a very traditional artist. All Japanese art seems to spawn genres in extraordinary quantity, and even so recent an art as filmmaking permits of subtle distinctions like that between the *haha mono*, or "mother" picture, and the *tsuma mono*, or "wife" picture. Ozu's

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chosen genre was the *shomin geki*, the drama of middle-class workers. Unlike Kurosawa, who has tried his hand at every genre with very un-Japanese eclecticism, Ozu concentrated diligently on one genre and one alone. This single-minded adherence to a convention is one of the things that makes Ozu's work seem so foreign to us, or at least so uncommercial. We thrive on anything we have never seen before, on originality and innovation. But his films are as unremittingly alike as their English-language titles suggest: *Late Spring* (1949), *Early Summer* (1951), *Early Spring* (1956), *Late Autumn* (1960), *Early Autumn* (1961) or *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962).

The scene mentioned before, in which some men get drunk and behave badly, occurs almost identically in all three of the Ozu films that have been released here. Nor is this the only scene or character that *Tokyo Story* (1953), *Early Spring* and *An Autumn Afternoon* share. The plots of all three films deal with the most common dramas of middle-class life. In *Tokyo Story* an elderly couple go on a trip to visit their children, who are clearly not pleased to see them, and on the way home the woman falls ill and dies. In *An Autumn Afternoon* a widower goes through the dilemma of finding a suitable husband for a daughter with whom he doesn't get along. In *Early Spring* a young man has an affair with a woman from his office, but goes back to his wife when friends intercede. Even the players are pretty much the same in all three films.

If these films are at times hard to sit through, however, it is not because of any tedium. Far from making ordinary life appear tedious or insignificant, they make the ordinary seem almost too significant. Sadness is here stripped of that momentousness we usually associate with it. It becomes the most commonplace, inescapable emotion, and as such, threatens to make life unbearable. What both saves it from doing so and creates such a vision of it in the first place is Ozu's style. The very style of these films is a ritual, a ceremony of repetitions in which there are not only recurrent characters and situations from film to film, but recurring images and shots within each film. In both *Tokyo Story* and *Early Spring*, for instance, there are repeated shots of a rail line with a train going by. These are typical even in content of the way Ozu used such punctuation. The shot is always of something that has no meaning, no importance, in and of itself—something that is just part of the trivial, enduring routine of life.

Perhaps the most characteristic such shots in Ozu's films are those of hallways outside offices or apartments. Any director might use this sort of shot once, the first time the audience sees the setting to which the hallway leads. But Ozu repeated these establishing shots every time he had us return there. The effect is to deny that abbreviation of the action we are used to in a drama. It's as if he wished us to walk down that hall every time we visited that room just as one would have to do to revisit a room in real life. This forces us to experience the moment of expectation and waiting which is so large a part of life and so often omitted from art. It forces us to experience the characters' lives as mere process.

And into this mere process Ozu's films fit their most singular and decisive moments. *Tokyo Story* begins with the usual business of the day. The train goes by. The one daughter still living at home goes to her teaching job. A neighbor sticks her head in to wish the old couple a happy journey to Tokyo. And at the film's end, as the old man sits utterly alone, his wife now dead and his uncaring children departed, that same everyday round of events is repeated: the train goes by, the daughter goes to her job, the neighbor sticks her head in. It is a moment of unspeakable sadness. All human experience must finally conform to this regulation. It is only as this pattern of inconsequential activity that life itself survives—it is only by *being* this pattern that it does so. The sense of expectation we had walking down all those halls has at last led us into a room in which this quotidian reality is the only truth.

How Japanese and traditional this view of life is can be seen, I suspect, from the position assumed by Ozu's camera. In all the repeated shots which establish this view, the camera is mounted low to the ground—uncomfortably low, for our Western senses. But this position, which is roughly that of a man seated cross-legged on the floor, is the one from which Noh theater is watched and from which the haiku master contemplates life. In some ways such an angle may seem to us, like much else in Ozu's films, very awkward. But if we find his work difficult to watch, it isn't because of this or because he demands too great a patience of us. It's because we are used only to having our emotions coarsened by our movies, and we can't stand the reproach of a man who is capable of doing the opposite.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

JOHN NIXON, JR.

FROST

Is there a ballerina in the house?
Inquires the pulse, that celebrated dancer,
Leaping to winter music by J. Strauss.

There was a ballerina with a wand
Like ice, with feet like wind. She pirouetted
All night upon the petrifying pond.

But she was not for morning. On the breeze
Some hint of her persists—who would not team with
The lithe Nijinsky of the arteries.

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QUICK, WATSON, THE NEEDLE

MARK TAYLOR

There is a remarkable irony in the recent blossoming of the Sherlock Holmes industry, replete with annotated editions, studies of source and analogue, conjectures about the relationship of Sherlock to Victorian propriety and naughtiness, biographies of the ur-Watson Conan Doyle, and the Royal Shakespeare production of the Doyle-Gillette *Sherlock Holmes* opening on Broadway in November. All this scholarly activity, confined neither to properly accredited Sherlockians nor to desperate graduate students eager to avoid another dissertation on Faulkner, suggests the present unsolved problem within the canon. And that, of course, is the irony (or is it, rather, presumption?): that the greatest problem-solver of them all left to us, fallible plodding mortals, a legacy of unexpected conundrums. Is it possible that the 60 cases are now to be re-opened, and the true solution to them will depend on the deductive acuity of a host of Inspector Lestrades? Alas, yes! As these two books clearly show, the simple equation of Holmes with the Edinburgh physician Joseph Bell, Watson with Doyle, and the rest with the imagination no longer works.

Samuel Rosenberg's book is, surely, most unlike any other work of biography or literary criticism—I'm not quite certain what the term for it is—ever written. Its scope is admittedly, insistently, awesome: it contains, the author tells us, "my more than one hundred discoveries"; it is a "book of totally new and revolutionary discoveries," including at least one "astonishing and hitherto-unsuspected 'recognition.'" The techniques that will be applied to the Holmes canon are shown early on as the reader is directed "with the help of my pointing finger" to the allegorical level of *Robinson Crusoe,* no surprise since for earlier literary investigations, Mr. Rosenberg writes, "I was much praised." Evidently he figures to receive more praise still since the work under consideration, so says the blurb on the dust jacket, "enhances his own reputation."

Wow! But maybe the congratulations are in order, for whatever reservations one might have about *Naked is the Best Disguise,* they will not include doubt about why the book was written, a doubt that justifiably arises when one finishes reading a large percentage of contemporary literary studies. Mr. Rosenberg indeed has a great deal to contribute to the Sherlock Holmes industry that has sprung up in the last few years, for example, the "astonishing and hitherto-unsuspected 'recognition'" that Holmes' archenemy, the nefarious Professor Moriarty, derives from the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, misread through Victorian eyes, though in another way so does Holmes himself. But Nietzsche is only one recognizable prototype since Doyle also borrows liberally from Shakespeare, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* Oscar Wilde, assorted pederasts in the biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and much else.

Naked is the Best Disguise: The Death and Resurrection of Sherlock Holmes

SAMUEL ROSENBERG

Bobbs-Merrill, $8.95

The Seven-Per-Cent Solution

NICHOLAS MEYER

Dutton, $6.95

But as Doyle (Mr. Rosenberg does to a turn the canard that the stories were really written by Dr. Watson) reaped, so did he sow—a rich field harvested by James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and Franz Kafka, whose works draw variously and ingeniously from the adventures of the great detective. However, Doyle, both borrower and lender, is still true to his own self, for beneath the myriad disguises of Holmes, his associates, and his antagonists stands, in challenging nakedness, the writer, inviting us always to find him there by seizing, as Mr. Rosenberg has done, on the transparently obvious equation that the two-story houses where the climactic scenes in Holmes narratives usually occur point irresistibly, if only we will look, to two-story stories, that is, to a personal allegory beneath the simple detective fiction. (Personally I can't think of *any Victorian* novel in which two-story houses don't loom large.) We know from Poe that the hardest place to find something is the easiest place to conceal it. Thus, continuously present beneath the Holmes adventure is the Conan Doyle syndrome, really, points Mr. Rosenberg's finger, a "sin-drome," Doyle's "personal myth or allegory" revealed in clusters of ideas that "routinely associate normal and deviant sexuality with crimes of passion and with murder especially mass murder," and also with inveterate hermaphroditism and with tell-tale books—all in the service of outlining Doyle's curious psychosexual orientation.

Is it all true? Here is a riddle everyone knows:

Q. If you had an 800-pound gorilla in your house, where would he sleep?

A. Anywhere he wanted to.

Mr. Rosenberg is the 800-pound gorilla of scholarship. He does not so much persuade as he grinds down and intimidates. His method is less argument than assault. The reader wearies and reels under the weight of evidence. Where a

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single bit of data would convince, a dozen daze, and it is a dozen, or two dozen, we get. There is no proportion in the proofs adduced; the valuable is mixed indiscriminately with the misleading and the valueless. Neither is there proportion, or order—except insofar as one senses the author's mounting excitement—in the organization of the book, and it jumps from Switzerland to India, from Frankenstein's Monster to William Morris, arriving shaken at each station, never quite sure how it got there. The book's gestalt resembles that of a metaphysical poem.

Mr. Rosenberg quotes Professor Hugh Kenner on Holmes: "The sleuth's [intellectual] bric-a-brac is notorious." So is Mr. Rosenberg's own, discovery following upon discovery, trivia upon trivia, anti-climax upon anti-climax. Hence, a demonstration of Doyle's dependence, in *A Study in Scarlet*, on Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book* leads up to the dubious clincher that Richard Altick calls Browning a "connoisseur of crime" in his Penguin edition of the poem, a sobriquet that Holmes surely deserves. Is one to infer that Mr. Altick was thinking of Holmes when he dubbed Browning? And at the end of an especially breathless chapter Mr. Rosenberg offers a dazzling deduction, only to say to the bemused reader, "My reasons for believing so cannot be given at this moment of my narration."

It's hard for the reader to keep his head up in this tidal wave—to insist on accuracy and logic, to separate the incontrovertible from the merely plausible and the provably specious, where all is characterized by a tone of utter and aggressive certitude. But there are, in fact, errors everywhere. On pages 100-101, for instance, the date of Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 1567, is given as 1565, and *Frankenstein, A Study in Scarlet*, and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* are forced into uneasy association by their making much of ancient Roman authors—but only because the Greek Plutarch conveniently becomes a Roman for the occasion. These are petty matters, but they raise doubts and invite a sustained inquiry into the larger argument. The subject of these pages is the coalescence of reading or writing with dust in Doyle and other writers. Mr. Rosenberg quotes Sherlock: "I could *read all that in the dust*" (Mr. Rosenberg's italics), and avers that Shakespeare uses the same image," "expressed in identical words." "Identical" is a very favorite word of Mr. Rosenberg's, one that should allow of little ambiguity: one assumes the only word identical with *dust* is *dust*, and so one is disappointed to find that the dust of Doyle is—if one looks at the text of *Titus Andronicus*—the "earth" or the "sandy plot" of Shakespeare, as in Golding's Ovid it is in the "sande," near misses, to be sure, but ones that undercut the whole point of this chapter.

There is, then, much sloppy scholarship in *Naked is the Best Disguise*, but to say so is to repay boundless energy with pedantry, for the mind of its author, swinging indiscriminately and joyfully from the trivial to the astute, is the real protagonist of the book, and anyway, why go after an 800-pound gorilla with a fly swatter? To vary the metaphor (while letting Mr. Rosenberg continue as an elemental force of nature): a description of the book's flaws, or, indeed, of its virtues, tells us no more about its real nature than a seismograph reveals about the *experience* of an earthquake. The book is simply *there* for the humble.

I hesitate to chart the provenance of *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*. It is a novel, and a very good one—good in that it tells a snappy, gripping story that everyone will want to finish in a single sitting—and I don't want to say how it comes out, so why say anything except: read it. But in his own quieter way, I suppose Nicholas Meyer, like Samuel Rosenberg, has something to say about the cultural pertinence of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Mr. Meyer doesn't expose Doyle's intentions, he adjusts them. A new manuscript of Watson's appears, indicating that *The Final Problem*, the story in which Holmes and Moriarty fight (apparently) to their mutual death, was only "a fiction," a smokescreen put up so that the despairing Watson could spirit Holmes off to Vienna, in 1891, to have his cocaine addiction treated by the young Dr. Sigmund Freud. As two geniuses who are denigrated by the dull establishments of their respective disciplines, Holmes and Freud get along smashingly, and not only does Freud cure Holmes, the two men collaborate in preventing, or at least delaying, a really big crime.

It's excitement and great fun, but I suspect that more than whimsy dictated his imaginary rendezvous of the master of ratiocination and the father of psychoanalysis. Impressed by Freud's treatment of one patient Holmes says, "Do you know what you have done? You have succeeded in taking my methods—observation and inference—and applied them to the inside of a subject's head." He continues, "Remarkable. You know, Doctor, I shouldn't be surprised if your application of my methods proves in the long run more important than the mechanical uses I make of them."

Might Conan Doyle, Dr. Conan Doyle, be then the *grand*father of psychoanalysis? Now there is a thesis worth pondering.

MARK TAYLOR *teaches in the English Department at Manhattan College.*

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So night ends/darkness
thins toward
this indefinite
moment: the city

stands motionless in
temporary beauty & the small
gardens come together in
silence/expectation.

The birds bow down &
crickets kneel in/in-
explicable knowledge & wind/
flowers/little animals

hush into waiting for
the trumpets & tambourines &
drums of the resurrection/its
oncoming light.

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The people of plenty suddenly find themselves short of energy for their machines, fearful about space for recreation, perplexed and frustrated that the pursuit of enterprise now appears to lead only to disaster and desecration. Such is the terrifying cost of freedom. Liberalism as an ideology and as a body of political practices has turned some men loose to forge ahead. The costs of freedom turn out to be far too great, however, and so the remedy becomes clear: to end the abuses of freedom, curtail freedom itself. The proposition sounds horrifying, Ferkiss contends, only if received by ears and minds tainted too long by liberalism. Modern students of society have shown, after all, that we are mere puppets twitched and turned by culture: the freedom on

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which we preen ourselves is itself only an ideological sweetening provided as part of a culture intent on subduing the natural world and turning it over for raping by man.

Ferkiss has read widely, and so he draws a really punishing indictment of liberalism for its sociological näivete about making men free, as well as for its time-boundedness, since liberalism arose in a world that knew not overpopulation or crises about water tables or smokestacks as dispensers of carcinogens. The myths of liberalism offer no hope of viable solutions for the future. Ferkiss, though, does not draw a dispirited or defeatist conclusion from his analysis. He is deeply and utterly optimistic. Men are basically good: that is to say, they seek out what is good and promotes life, and they will use their reason in the service of what is good.

Convinced of the bankruptcy of the political theory which had dominated American development, spurred by the magnitude of present problems, undaunted by any stubbornness or stickiness in human nature, Ferkiss proceeds to sketch a "necessary Utopia," a vision of the future in which ecological considerations rule. He offers only a sketch, noting that no one can possibly supply all the details, but convinced that such a sketch must be put forward. He wants the entire drive of American life and politics turned around so that the first test for any decision or policy becomes ecological soundness, not votes or profits or the venting of irrational motivations. The legislature and executive will persist, but various kinds of information-gathering agencies will constantly channel to both governmental arms the best assessment of the likely results of a proposed technological innovation. Then the legislature and executive will act on the ground of that information.

Now not all men will agree on what is reasonable, and so it will become imperative to use the power of the state. Ferkiss suggests, for example, that some city blocks may be zoned so that no one living there in an apartment may give a loud party. Curbs applied to advertising will serve to cut demand for products whose manufacture leads to ecological improprieties.

And why will people put up with such manipulative direction of their existence? Because they understand rationally that the plundering of the natural universe must stop, and because they will come to find satisfaction through outlets other than big cars and big power boats. Ferkiss holds out the prospect of a "re-eroticization of the culture," perhaps faintly signalled by the increase in nudity noted this summer, a rise which came off after this book appeared. ESP and clairvoyance, and sex freed from the anxieties attending possible procreation figure among the other possibilities for enjoyment while bearing the yoke of environmental restraints.

And how do people escape from the present era of exhaust fumes and cereals labelled "natural" which are nevertheless heavily sugared? Certain individuals already possess great awareness of the dangers surrounding all men, as well as the rhetorical talents and charisma for spreading their awareness. They will energize others and gradually raise the level of consciousness of thousands, and then millions. Fever for change will radiate outward from the sensitive and informed type of "technological man" whom Ferkiss described in an earlier book. Violence stands tabooed; change must come peacefully, as understanding and realization roll onward. The state's power can lead also to certain critical actions which will help people to understand the indispensability of further alterations in existing patterns.

Where have we heard all this before? Ferkiss has rehearsed the stock in trade of all modern revolutionaries, only excepting the resort to violence. Men are good, men are rational, life can be planned and arranged and rigged to bring the greatest good into existence, some men are better and more rational than others and so they will take the lead, and for the recalcitrant and the lackadaisical and the unconvertible beer drinkers and pro football fans, a little state pressure will do wonders. Some men know better than others what all men should be doing. Ferkiss is down on demolition derbies, and he supposes that moral retraining in the interests of the ethical primacy of life, together with some police activity, will stop forever pleasantries such as the dogfighting recently reported by the *New York Times*. There will come an age when men will no longer whet the appetites of puppies by suspending kittens in baskets for them to maul.

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REVIEWERS

RICHARD L. SCHOENWALD teaches in the Department of History at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

WALLACE FOWLIE, professor of French at Duke, has just published a critical study on Lautreamont.

DANIEL STERN, a novelist and critic whose books include *The Suicide Academy* and *The Rose Rabbi*, has just completed a new novel, *Final Cut* (Viking).

BRUCE COOK is the author of *The Beat Generation* and *Listen to the Blues* (Scribner's).

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too depressing for me. I do not believe that freedom is already so illusory that we may as well do away with any semblance of it except for the possibility of attending a seance when you want to. I believe that men can discern problems: fragile natural settings need protection against real estate maggots. I believe that men can direct changes: lower speed limits save lives by giving people permission to go slower. I also believe that classical liberalism contained real psychological wisdom in its call to men to discover and use their talents. Liberalism could change into an irrational imperative benefiting only some, and not too many, as Louis Hartz noted. Liberalism in fact came to fasten leechlike onto human narcissism and led men to erect skyscrapers on the backs of their fellows. Philip Slater may indeed be right when he argues, in *The Glory of Hera*, that the materialization of narcissism in modern history has proven far too costly and must give way to life lived under the banner of "Make Love Not War." I prefer to let the great structure of human life alter piecemeal and so generate new attitudes, as perhaps the family already is reshaping itself, rather than resorting to institutional dynamiting in line with the attitudes of a relative handful of middle-class intellectuals. In fact I don't believe it's a matter of preference: structures change, and attitudes follow, not the other way round.

Ferkiss has the ability to see that men cannot live only for themselves. A deep concern with generations unborn comes through his generally flat and unmoving prose. Nothing exists, though, beyond these generations, no transcendent directive, no God. "Piety toward planet Earth" adequately acknowledges "the forces of life which some call God." The dream of existence perfected and topped with a new cult is a nightmare, as searching spirits from Wordsworth to Reinhold Niebuhr have shown. The alternative need not and cannot be inaction; it can be, and should be, determined laboring in the direction of a final good which can never engineer into actuality but which we believe to exist above and beyond us.

Georges Bernanos: A Biography

ROBERT SPEAIGHT

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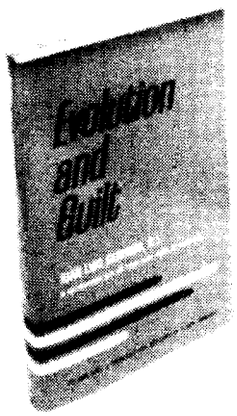
WALLACE FOWLIE

In an exceptional way Robert Speaight has combined his career of actor (many of us still remember his brilliant interpretation of the archbishop in Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*) and his career of writer. His books on Hilaire Belloc and Teilhard de Chardin testify to his skill in the art of biography. He has demonstrated on many occasions an extensive knowledge of contemporary France and especially of the Catholic revival in French letters beginning with Charles Péguy in the early part of the century and culminating perhaps in the recent death of Jacques Maritain.

Georges Bernanos occupied a central position in this movement. But it



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was an unusual position and Robert Speaight has set himself the task of exploring and analyzing the reasons that made Bernanos into the kind of witness he was. While writing essentially a biography, Speaight studies each of the books of Bernanos as they emerge from the daily harassed and complex life of the writer. As important as the day-by-day existence of the man in France or Majorca or Brazil, was the political, social and religious background of the moment in French history between the First World War and the provisional government of Charles de Gaulle in 1945.

Mr. Speaight has drawn upon all of the available sources for the writing of this biography: the books and correspondence of Bernanos, and the acknowledged debts the biographer owes to Albert Béguin, literary executor of Bernanos, to Mgr. Pézeril who became executor at Béguin's death in 1959, to Jean-Loup, the sixth child of Bernanos, to Luc Estang who wrote the first book about Bernanos, to André Rousseaux, the critic who introduced Speaight to Bernanos in London in 1945, two years before the writer's death.

At the time of that meeting, Bernanos had just returned from Brazil where he had been living with his large family for seven yeras. All the events and personal dramas that preceded that voluntary exile are discussed by Speaight in an analysis that involves a great deal of French history as well as a sympathetic understanding of the violence and the tenderness in the character of Bernanos. Speaight never relinquishes an effort—no matter how delicate and difficult—to explain to his readers what Bernanos meant by his vocation, that of being a Frenchman, a writer and a Christian.

In order to clarify the rich subject of his book, Mr. Speaight draws parallels between Bernanos and three other figures: Péguy, first. Both men admired and tried to emulate the courage of Jeanne d'Arc in the assertion of her freedom and vocation. (Bernanos' wife Jeanne was a direct descendent of a brother of Jeanne d'Arc.) Charles de Gaulle, with his concept of French nationalism, is the second parallel. And the third is Dante, and the need, for any satsifactory reading of Dante and Bernanos, for the reader to accept their Catholicism with its dogmatic definitions.

School was never a passionate experience for Bernanos, as it had been for Péguy. He was a difficult pupil, noisy, eccentric, in rebellion against most of the conventions of secondary education. His earliest passion was for the Action Française, and for its leader Charles Maurras. Speaight describes the life-long struggle Bernanos put forth to recover from the politics of the Action Française and from its anti-Semitism. But he never renounced his original faith in French monarchy. This early adherence to the Action Française made his associations with other Catholic writers difficult and stormy at times: Claudel, Massis, Mauriac, and especially Maritain.

And yet it was Maritain who accepted Bernanos' first novel, *Sous le soleil de Satan (Under the Sun of Satan)* for publication in the series Roseau d'Or he was editing for Plon. The book appeared in 1926, and was both a success and a scandal. It was shocking for many readers to see the devil appear in the novel as a visible tangible person. Even Maritain feared there were traces of manichaean heresy in the work.

Soon after the appearance of this first novel, Bernanos began publishing briefer polemical works, and became from the start a pamphleteer in the great tradition. And he also began, despite ever-increasing poor health, his life of a nomad. The *midi* attracted him, and he settled in Toulon briefly in 1929, and then in La Bayonne, near Hyères. In the summer of 1935, he decided to emigrate to Paraguay, but made a first stop in Majorca. In his correspondence at that time he was referring to a new work—the diary of a country priest. This novel, *Journal d'un curé de campagne,* was destined to become his best known work. It was awarded the Académie Française prize and was turned into a film by Robert Bresson.

In his discussion of the beauty and importance of this novel, Robert Speaight develops a sound critical theory that it is essentially a book of happiness—in comparison to the first novel which he considers a book of unhappiness. The young priest in the north village of Ambricourt—we are never told his name—permitted Bernanos to develop the themes that were closest to him: poverty, simplicity and the spirit of childhood.

The war years were spent in Brazil where Bernanos finished his novel *Monsieur Ouine,* considered today by several critics to be his masterpiece. From Paris in 1945, General de Gaulle invited a few eminent exiles to return to France: Teilhard de Chardin from Peking, Maritain from New York, and

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Bernanos from Brazil. Bernanos made the voyage despite physical and mental suffering, and despite the first symptoms of cancer which was to cause his death. He made new friends in Paris with André Malraux and with the Dominican Father Brückberger who called his attention to Gertrud von le Fort's *Song from the Scaffold,* a novel on the martyrdom of Carmelite sisters guillotined in 1794. The dramatization of this work, *Dialogues des Carmélites,* was Bernanos' last writing and still holds today an important place in the history of Christian drama. It was made into an opera by Francis Poulenc.

In *Dialogues des Carmélites,* Bernanos changed his focus from the mystery or sanctity of the priesthood to the mystery of Church, or the mystery of the Communion of Saints. But it is clear from the Robert Speaight biography that the great mission of Bernanos was to describe the flowering of grace in a human life and the supernatural help given in the sacraments of which the priest is the minister. The concrete figure of the priest reaches its summation in *Journal d'un curé de campagne.* The last words of the dying curé d'Ambricourt, *tout est grâce,* testify to that belief without which the priestly vocation has no meaning.

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DANIEL STERN

So much has been written during the past few years about Anais Nin's relationship to "the dream" to "the surreal," that I believe some corrective thinking may be in order. Any large achievement is capable of being set in different lights and seen to possess different esthetic truths. And one of the principal problems of dealing with Anais Nin's work has been the odd historical, artistic and biographical accident that has segmented her work (and her followers and dissenters) into two parts: the surreal element in which her early novels lead their strange, dream-like lives—and the crisply and elegantly detailed prose in which her *Diaries* lead *their* rich, emotional and intellectual lives. The *Diaries* are full of comments about the question of our dream-selves, full of insights and ruminations about what we give up when we sacrifice the night-self to the hard, limited reality of the day-self—but the light in which the *Diaries* swim is clear and golden; even the nights are clearly painted in deep blues that may evoke mystery but do not, in themselves embody mystery.

On the contrary, the *Diaries* are full of precisely recalled and described detail—incident—laughter—ironies recollected sometimes in tranquility, sometimes in anguish . . . (as when she described, in this *Diary* volume number five, her recurrent battles with the disease of anxiety.) The roster of characters of earlier *Diaries* is different from the persona of the novels. The char-

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acters in the *Diaries* are as real as we have come to expect characters in novels by Dickens or Tolstoy to be. (Though the personae in the novels were often drawn from life. One quite moving section in the volume deals with the author's struggle to transmute the real beloved man, Gonzalo, to the character, Rango, in the novel, *The Four Chambered Heart*. One has only to compare the 'availability' of the the wild, guitar-playing, sexual being the real Gonzalo is in the previous *Diaries*, to the fictional Rango, to see that the essential esthetic of the *Diaries* is a realistic one: a poetics involving the observing and analytic mind as much as or more than the heart.)

The experimental, dream-techniques of the early work, the novels, endeared Miss Nin to an underground following. Yet, strangely, those young people who share their *Diary* enthusiasm with the novels, admire such "real" virtues as the courage and independence of characters like Sabina in *A Spy in the House Of Love*. Such admiration, of course, sets the stage for the central drama of the *Diaries'* achievement in finding a place in the contemporary imagination: the identity of the central heroine, the author.

She is not unlike a female version of the young men in the novels of that ultimate realist, Balzac. Observe the outer drama . . . (and in the *Diaries* there is no conflict or arbitrary separation between the inner and outer dramas). A young woman of mixed, cosmopolitan background—Spanish father, the composer Joaquin Nin and a French-Danish mother, who was a singer, leads a nomadic early life. With her family she trails around Europe, behind the career of her musician father. Then, when her parents separate, she begins a *Diary* as a love-offering to her absent father.

In Paris, she becomes the center of a group of exiled artists which includes Henry Miller and Lawrence Durrell, both as yet unknown. Acts of courage and acts of love mingle as she handprints and publishes Henry Miller's first work—and subtly jousts, sexually and romantically with Miller and his wild wife, June.

The courage consists mainly in the act of endurance. Endurance in writing unpopular, lyrical and highly personal novels . . . endurance in continuing as a writer in the face of consistent neglect . . . (Indeed, she was forced to publish the first work that brought her into the public eye, herself. It was *Under a Glass Bell*, and one of the earlier volumes of the *Diary* describes movingly and with some irony how Edmund Wilson unexpectedly praised the book in the pages of *The New Yorker*, and then proposed marriage to Miss Nin, saying "I'll teach you how to write.")

The characters that throng the earlier volumes—and this present one—do so in the manner of the realistic novel. In Volume Four, the portrait of an ambivalent, ambitious, sexually ambiguous Gore Vidal is a fully-fleshed novelistic portrait. Even the techniques used are those of the realistic novel: almost a little old-fashioned. A passing insight, a phone call expressing anguish over the reception of one of his books, an excerpt from a letter. . . . And, through the converging and diverging relationships of a group of her friends in New York after the war, she succeeds in giving as vivid a picture of those edgy, hopeful years as any Steinbeck novel might.

In the present *Diary*, in the years from 1947 to 1955, the spiritual tone is restless, as are the physical journeys. It begins with a stunning evocation of Mexico—Acapulco before it became quite so fashionable. Then New York, Los Angeles, a return to Paris (a partial spiritual home for this rootless wanderer). Again there is a complex friendship with a younger man. Before it was Gore Vidal, now the young playwright and novelist and actor James Leo Herlihy. As in the other *Diaries*, there is an ebb and flow of helping and being helped. (The numbers of younger writers Anais Nin has assisted must be, by now, uncountable.)

These are also the years of the publication of *A Spy in The House of Love*. A controversial publication, because the deeply feminine and psychoanalytical (with a small "p") vision is ahead of its time. Even a friend, the critic Maxwell Geismar, fails to understand the intent behind the "female" vision. *Spy* is, obviously a book, now, whose time has come. Both the conventional wisdom of psychoanalysis and the new school of "uterine" women poets and novelists have prepared readers for this subterranean approach to a woman's stubborn strengths and weaknesses. At the time, however, the hostile comments of such women as Diana Trilling caused the author much pain.

In commenting on Volume Three of the *Diaries*, elsewhere, I pointed out

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Theology

Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., Louis Bouyer and Dr. Paul Minear are three of the visiting professors for the Spring Term, 1975, Department of Theology, Catholic University, Washington, D.C. Contact: Fr. James Coriden, Department of Theology, CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, Washington, D.C. 20064.

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that the manipulation of events, the excisions of characters and the inevitable changes made to protect living people as the *Diary* is brought into print, make this as much a kind of long, contemporary "novel" as it is a journal in the classic confessional mode.

What is also clearer, now, is that it is a "novel" in the tradition of the artistic *bildingsroman*: Jean-Christophe, *Portrait of The Artist as A Young Man*. . . . In the reflections of shifting social, personal and artistic currents, the central concern is, always: how to maintain the integrity of the artistic self in a careless world. How to endure with an unpopular vision. The repository of these concerns—in a form of continuing mirror effect—is the continuous composition of the *Diaries* themselves.

Interestingly, the more she is taken to task for an obscure and surreal art, Miss Nin expresses her concerns over this in a lucid, elegant commentary that uses the tools of the novelist, the essayist, the letter-writer and the poet. The shifts in mood, without losing consistency, are dazzling. On one page we are with her in a feared return to Paris after the war . . . the Paris of her artistic youth. On another page we are in Hollywood in producer Jerry Wald's office, where the question of a movie version of Proust is being discussed. A small vignette about a man she meets at the laundry in Sierre Madre tells the life story of an aristocratic Austrian refugee, brought low by war and a strange marriage. She dubs him Count Laundromat; it is a touching two-page short story.

These are also the years of her parents' death—described with a simplicity of anguish: truthful and touching. But always encounters with people are judged not by their prestige or power, but whether they are alive or dead within. One understands why the young have taken her up: it is the concern for authenticity. This *Diary*, like the others, is shaped so as to end with an extraordinary event. In the first volume it was a shattering stillbirth. Here it is an LSD experience that is the only unsentimental description of such an event I can recall having read. It is baroque and seductive . . . but Miss Nin rejects it, finally, as an authentic road. The true drug for her is art and, in a fuller sense, the *Diary*.

In an earlier volume, she wrote: *I am not writing about objective reality, which is photographic, but as people see and* feel *reality, their reality. . . . Novels of the past dealt either with classic objectivity, or accepted the subjective irrational but never clarified it. . . .*

In the continuing literary adventure of the *Diary* Anais Nin is merging both those approaches to literary and human experience. Finally, there is no conflict between the small audience she gained with her underground (I always think of them as undersea) novels and the great audience for the *Diary*. The tension between the two is like the dream and the psychoanalysis of the dream—which leads to the clarity of the day.

Behind the dream is always the material of buried quotidian life. And behind the morning mind is always the shadowed memory of the nighttime symbols and buried fears and wishes that subtly color the day.

The *Diary* of Anais Nin is, thus, synthesis not antithesis; the whole not the part. In its concentration on observed realistic detail it is most poetically moving. And in the *Diary's* insistence on its own being, against so many odds, it is as much a human—as it is an artistic—achievement: a permanent gift.

Love-Hate Relations: English and American Sensibilities

STEPHEN SPENDER

Random House, $8.95

BRUCE COOK

There is so much good to say about this new book by Stephen Spender, so many pleasures that it will provide the casual reader, that it may seem mean-spirited and petty, but I intend to begin with an objection: it isn't the book it purports to be.

Just look at the title and subtitle—

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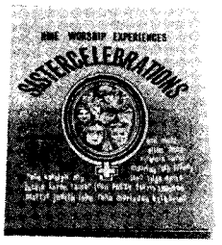

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Love-Hate Relations: English and American Sensibilities. It suggests a study that is comprehensive, complete, and with the addition of Stephen Spender's name beneath, perhaps even definitive. After all, Spender is *Spender* —not just the poet in the anthologies, but of all active trans-Atlantic intellectuals perhaps the most experienced, the most understanding of and sympathetic to the American realities: the very man, in short, to write this particular book. Well, don't get your hopes up. It is not nearly as comprehensive as you might suppose. The very nature of the subject calls for historical development, but Spender makes only a gesture in that direction early on in the book. Instead, he moves topically from one area that interests him to the next. There are so many gaps between that the effect is that of a collection of essays loosely organized around a single subject and principle.

The subject, of course, is English-American literary relations. And the principle: that gradually, over the past 150 years or so, America and England have exchanged roles as cultural dependencies; where England once dominated by virtue of its great tradition, America now does through its superior energy. But Spender is not much interested in why all this should be; he is almost exclusively concerned with the *how* of it—with the deep impression made by England on Henry James, with the impact of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound on Georgian London, and finally with his own response to the turbulent American university scene in the late 1960s.

But all this suggests the book's virtues, too: it is a personal work, one whose every page is informed by the author's first-hand experience of the two cultures. There is a firm sense of a real human sensibility at work here and not some dryasdust scholar compiling facts and footnotes (although I'll concede that a note or two and an index, at least, would certainly have been welcome).

To take a prime example, his treatment of Eliot and Pound is superb—the best thing in the book—and this is because these two are of immense personal importance to Spender, the poet. He succeeds, perhaps better than anyone has succeeded, in putting these two in the English context. He makes us see Pound, "the flame-haired, russet-bearded, green-eyed visitant" who was to be the eternal outsider. And Eliot, so much a servant of the tradition he revered that "he did really become English and not a cultural crossbreed." And their influence he sums up as follows in one of the book's many fine paragraphs:

> All the same, the paradox remains that Pound and Eliot left America because it had no center on which they could construct their vision of civilization, but having reached Europe their imaginations told them that the old European civilization was dead. They came to Europe for a new beginning, and realized, in fact, an end. They also confronted the English with this discovery. This had various results. One was to change the nature of the patriotic theme of search for the true England in English poetry. Another was to show that these were the last Americans who could come to Europe to build a literature upon its civilization. Another was perhaps to make a younger generation of English writers turn from the ruins of Europe to what they hoped would be the civilization of the United States.

These two, then, he sees as the pivotal figures in the literary relations of the two English-speaking cultures. After them, nothing would be quite the same between England and America: they came to school in Europe, specifically in England—and they stayed to teach class.

About all that has transpired since he is less good—again, except for those things that impinge upon him personally. His comments on the American university culture, "one of several parallel cultures," are well observed and to the point. They also tie perfectly to the larger point he

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makes on the feelings of isolation felt by the American writer trapped inside that culture:

> The bitter bread on which he feeds is the reflection that the fire of American genius which flows through his veins is exactly that which cuts him off from the great materialist democracy. For his idea of democracy is that the whole people should respond to the genius of an Emerson or a Whitman. If there is an elite then everyone ought to accept and recognize it—not just a special public. As Whitman wrote, "Great poets must have great audiences."

His choice of Randall Jarrell as an example of the sort of writer for whom these feelings were overwhelmingly real is tragically exact.

In all, *Love-Hate Relations* is an interesting, though not really very satisfying book. It is shot through with wit, chatty and informal in style, with marvelously exact observations tossed off in paragraph after paragraph. (An example: "W. H. Auden was as much a New Yorker as he was British, but he was not at all American.") Still, it doesn't really take us anywhere. If he had, perhaps, had something of overriding importance to himself to get across to us, then the book's topical organization—sometimes it seems to have not organization at all—might then have worked. Might.

For those seriously interested in the subject, the best thing would be to read through Martin Green's excellent books, *A Mirror for Anglo-Saxons, Reappraisals, The Problem of Boston* and *Cities of Light and Sons of the Morning,* before looking at Spender. This is not to say that *Love-Hate Relations* is not worth reading—merely that it would best be taken as dessert to the main course.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 75)

merited tribute to Maurice Lavanoux and Eloise Spaeth and several other stalwarts who have lit many candles amid the encircling U.S. church art gloom. All is not lost.

(REV.) C.J. MCNASPY, S.J.

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Frank Getlein's outspoken article [Sept. 6] is excellent and most timely. For many of us the actions of the Marcinkus-Macchi team have not only appeared inept but have been extremely frustrating.

I write you as the president of a Manhattan gallery which for the past eleven years has been exclusively concerned with the presentation of painting and sculpture of contemporary artists who have drawn upon the great themes of the Judeo-Christian religions in their work. These artists cannot be, even remotely, connected with the anachronisms of the Saint Sulpice-Barclay Street church goods industry; they work in the idiom of today and have brought new and dynamic insights to Christian iconography.

Despite the fact that this gallery has been able to place the work of many American artists in churches, monasteries, schools, seminaries and universities, Messrs. Marcinkus and Macchi did not deign to traverse the one short block from Madison to Lexington where we are located. EMILY BOUCHARD

President,
Contemporary Christian Art Gallery

Mixed Metaphors

Mount Carroll, Ill.

To the Editors: Please check the accuracy of the analogies your authors use. The analogy of heavy water or graphite and the United Nations force in "Cyprus: Three-Dimensional Problem" [Sept. 6] is so incorrect as to cast doubt on the accuracy of the rest of the article. Heavy water or graphite in a reactor instead of keeping the fuel from reaching a critical mass actually does just the opposite. The heavy water or graphite, which are called moderators, slows down the neutrons which are released in fission and ensures that a large number will be absorbed by the fuel rather than escaping or being absorbed elsewhere. This then allows the reactor to become "critical" while the same amount of fuel without the moderator present would not generally be critical. DON P. MOON

Chairman, Natural Sciences
Shimer College

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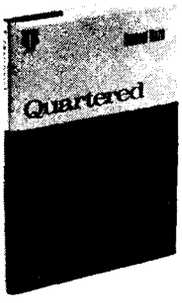
SAMUEL *Hazo**



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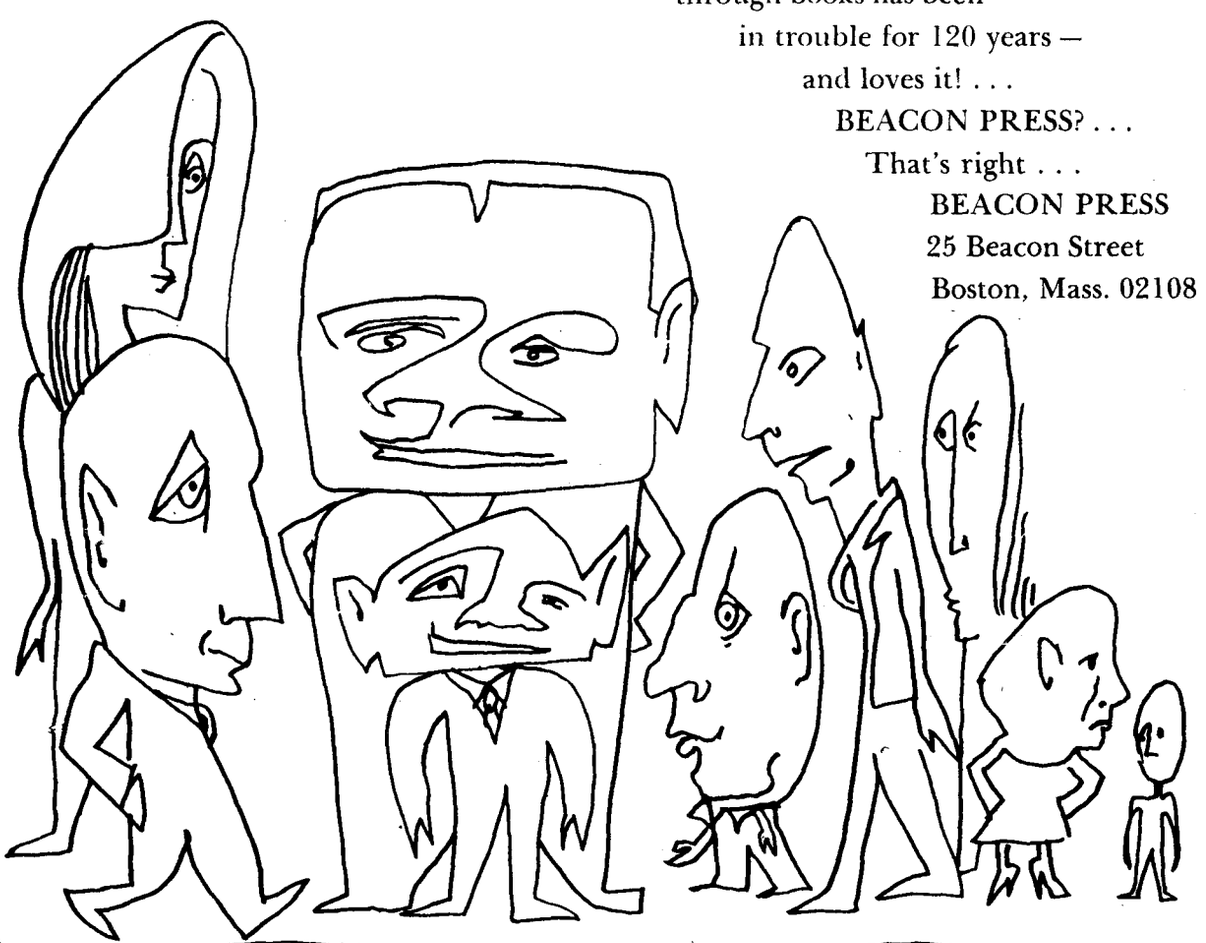

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